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Date: March 14, 2006

Route To:

Subject: Authorization to Operate FS Owned or Leased Vehicles

To: Forest Supervisors, RO Staff Directors

Any employee who needs to drive a Forest Service owned or leased vehicle must be authorized to do so and there is no exception for AD employees. This letter is to clarify Regional Policy for the authorization of this use and operation by our interagency partners and AD employees. Personal vehicles reimbursed under the federal travel regulations are exempt from the requirement.

Clarification of the licensing requirements for interagency partners:

The licensing direction in the current Master Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement established with our federal and state partners shall be followed. The agreement states:

Drivers and equipment operators will hold appropriate operating licenses to meet state and federal laws. Employees of the Parties to this Agreement may operate each other's vehicles provided that operator meets the current operating guidelines and training requirements of their own Party.

Clarification of the AD Employee requirements for driving/operator certification:

Not all ADs will require driver's authorization. Only those specifically hired as drivers or those ADs expected to drive rental cars or agency vehicles should be authorized. The intent is to meet manual requirements in the easiest manner possible. Related manual direction may be referenced in FSM 7130, FSH 6709.11 (Safety and Health Handbook) and FSH 7109.19.

For AD hires who are dispatched frequently and usually have the need to use Forest Service owned or leased vehicles up to 9,999 GVWR the following is required.

- Valid state drivers license for the type of vehicle to be driven. The state license must be carried with the employee any time they are driving a government vehicle.
- Verification of the state license. This can be in the form of a national record search conducted by the hiring unit or an affidavit from the state licensing bureau. The latter can be obtained by the AD for a small fee and information is available on either the Oregon www.oregon.gov/ODOT or Washington www.dol.wa.gov web site.
- R6-184-Employee Driver History or similar form must be completed. The form (filled out by the employee) asks about their experience as well as accidents or violations.
- The AD needs to complete the SF-47-Medical History. The form is filled out by the employee and asks about any medical conditions that might affect their ability to drive.



- Attend a defensive driver course with refreshers every 3 years. There are many options for getting this training, including some on-line sites.

If approved to drive, an AD employee will be issued a letter or authorization (sample enclosed) that must be with them whenever driving a government vehicle. The authorization form shall be signed by those individuals that have delegated hiring authority at the home Forest or at the Logistics Chief level for the intermittent use (expiring at the end of incident). If the application process turns up questionable information, the employee should either be denied driving or be given more training before driving. Additional background checks may also be needed.

For the off the street, single incident AD hire whose assignment is driving government furnished equipment we can use a shortened process. We will waive the verification of the state license but the AD will still need a valid state drivers license, complete the R6-184, the SF-47 and have a Defensive Driving short course. This can be accomplished through a Power Point presentation and a review of existing class manuals prior to driving.

If you have questions, call Kathy Shelton (503-808-2466) or Rebecca Hutchins (503-808-2393).

/s/Jim Golden (for):
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